

Sex Roles— Changes in the Middle Years

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Persons who conform unhappily to sex roles dictated by society can — and do — adjust in later years back to lifestyles in tune with their personalities.

But in the meantime, men and women who suppress characteristics of the opposite sex to fit traditional stereotypes "pay a heavy price in emotional stress."

This was reported by Florine B. Livson, researcher at the University of California's Institute of Human Development, at the 28th annual Gerontological Society Meeting in Louisville, Ky.

Livson described a group of psychologically healthy people in their 50's who had arrived in that happy state by different paths.

Adjusted and healthy throughout their lives were people whose personalities fit with traditional sex roles, men who were self-controlled, ambitious, concerned more with thinking than feeling, and women who were feminine and home-oriented.

But in their middle years, persons who are stifling their personalities to act those roles tend to run into trouble. These are women whose qualities are usually linked to male roles, who are intellectual, ambitious and skeptical, and highly sensitive, emotional men.

Livson studied characteristics of her subjects in early and late adolescence and at ages 40 and 50. She drew her group from the institute's Oakland Growth Study, which has kept track of the same people since 1932.

Men who were sensitive and emotional in their youth, she discovered, had suppressed their personalities to play the self-controlled, assertive roles demanded by society.

They, like men who came by those roles naturally, were highly successful executives

and professionals, husbands and fathers, most with children still at home.

But with those forced into the role, said Livson, "their masculinity at 40 is power-oriented and exploitative — colored by a macho quality. Their defenses are brittle, easily punctured. They are hostile and generally anxious. I suggest that their stress results from suppressing their emotionality to fulfill sex-role expectations of high-achieving men."

Non-traditional women, she said, suppressed their intellectuality and achievement drives, became constricted and depressed and were more likely than the "traditional" women to be divorced.

At Livson's first survey, done when her study group was at age 40, she found that seven men and seven women who fit in the traditional roles they played to be were psychologically healthy.

Mental health was poor for 14 men and 17 women whose personalities did not suit their roles.

But at age 50, all were psychologically healthy. Highly sensitive men had dropped power seeking and returned to their basic, emotional, affectionate personalities. Non-traditional women had revived their intellectuality and ambition.

"By the time this group reaches 50," said Livson, "women are finished with mothering duties and men may have come to terms with their achievements. A new perspective on life may have developed for both sexes, or perhaps sex norms are less rigid for people in the second half of their lives."

The point, she said, is that the 50's seemed to offer these persons new options and fulfillment after years of interior war against their own personalities.

Therapist to Discuss Midlife Changes

JAN 15 1978

Psychotherapist Florine Livson will discuss "The Double Standard of Living: Changing Perspectives at Mid-Life," when she speaks at 7:30 p.m. Monday in the North Congregational Church, Cedar and Walnut streets, Berkeley, under the auspices of the Institute of the Middle Years.

Ms. Livson, a research psychologist at the Institute of Human Development, is the author of "Images of Women," "Cultural Faces of Eve," and "Patterns of Personality Development in Middle-Age Women."

Admission is \$2.50 for the two-and-one-half hour program.

Slain woman was noted UC scholar

JUN 8 1981

By Don DeMain
and Jim Greaver
Tribune Staff Writers

A woman who was found shot to death Thursday night in a secluded area near Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland has been identified as Florine Claire Livson, 55, a prominent psychologist widely known for her research on middle-age behavior.

Livson's body was discovered by hikers on a short, dead-end road in the western portion of

the park off Monterey Boulevard just north of Leimert Boulevard.

She had been shot three times, once in the head and twice in the torso. Shell casings from a handgun were found at the scene, indicating that she had been killed where her body was found shortly before dusk.

Her car, a maroon 1980 Volvo, was discovered by Oakland police Sunday night in the 8600

See SCHOLAR, Back Page

Scholar

Continued from Page A-1

block of A Street near the Oakland Coliseum, nearly eight miles from the slaying scene.

The car was sealed and impounded by police for careful inspection today by homicide investigators.

Livson, who held a doctorate in psychology, did research for the University of California's Institute of Human Development at Berkeley, and also conducted a private practice from her office at 921 The Alameda, Berkeley.

She lived with her son, Paul, in El Cerrito. She has a daughter, Kate Livson of Arcadia.

She and her husband, Norman, also a psychologist, divorced some years ago.

A close friend identified her body Saturday night. She had been reported missing and friends and relatives had begun to search for her.

The friend, who asked not to be identified, expressed shock at Livson's violent death.

"It's terribly disturbing, someone that talented," the friend said. The friend added that Liv-

son was "too sharp" to do anything that would antagonize a potential attacker.

Livson was fully clothed in blue slacks and smock when she was found, and the motive for the killing apparently was not sex.

But investigators said it might have been robbery, since none of her personal effects were found with her. There was no identification on her body.

Livson apparently was driven or forced to drive to the killing scene in a redwood copse just west of the MacArthur Freeway, police said. Her car apparently was then driven away by the killer.

Five years ago Livson delivered a featured report on midlife sex roles at the 28th Annual Gerontological Society Meeting in Louisville, Ky.

Her research indicated that men and women who suppress sex in an effort to fit traditional roles pay a high price in emotional stress.

But during middle age, she said, they usually adjust and revert to lifestyles that are more in

tune with their inherent personalities.

She earned a doctorate in social-clinical psychology in 1974 at the Wright Institute, Berkeley. She came to the Institute of Human Development as a research fellow in 1975 and became a regular member of the research staff in 1979.

Her early work in the 1950s included a pioneering study on the psychological aspects of aging and retirement. The title of that study was "Aging and Personality," and was co-authored by the late Dr. Else Frenkel-Brunswick.

Livson's most recent work involved the psychology of women; mental health of women; and differences between men and women.

A book currently in press from the institute, "Past and Present in Middle Age," a major chapter of which, "Paths of Psychological Health in the Middle Years: Sex Differences," was written by Livson.

She had also served as consulting editor to two professional journals — Psychology of Women and Research on Aging.

Prominent UC scholar found slain

By Don DeMain
and Jim Greaver
Tribune Staff Writers

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See SCHOLAR, Back Page

In seeking Supreme Court review, Illinois Attorney General Tyrone Fahner argued that the 1979 ruling should control the Williams and Southall cases. As a backup argument, Fahner

1000 ft. above sea level

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\$5,000 reward is posted in slaying of psychologist

By Angel Fernandez
Tribune Staff Writer

JUN 10 1981

Family and friends of slain University of California psychologist Florine Livson have posted \$5,000 in reward money for information leading to the arrest and conviction of her killer.

Livson, 55, a well-known psychotherapist with UC's Institute of Human Development in Berkeley, was last seen alive leaving her office at 921 The Alameda in Berkeley late last Wednesday night.

Her fully clothed body was found Thursday evening at the edge of Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park, but the coroner's office said she had been dead at least 12 hours by then.

No personal papers were found on the body, which wasn't identified until Saturday night. Her car was found Sunday night near the Oakland Coliseum, but police said they found no clues in it.

Police in El Cerrito, where the divorced Livson lived, said they were not ruling out robbery as a motive, because her wallet was empty.

The reward money, held in escrow by the Wells Fargo Bank, is being collected by Livson's colleagues at the Institute of Human Development, according to administrative assistant Toni Costa.

Livson will be buried at 2 p.m. Thursday in the Tel Shalom section of Rolling Hills Memorial Park in El Sobrante.

Slain UC psychologist called 'cautious woman'

9 1981

By Martin Halstuk and Harry Harris
Tribune Staff Writers

BERKELEY — Slain University of California psychologist Florine Claire Livson was an "exceptional, cautious and careful" woman, according to the former director of the famed Institute of Human Development, where she worked.

The body of Livson, who joined the UC-operated institute in 1975, was found Thursday night on a lonely stretch of road on the outskirts of Joaquin Miller Park. She had been shot to death.

Paul H. Mussen, who headed the institute for 10 years until he stepped down last July, described Livson Monday as "extremely conscientious."

The prominent psychologist and researcher was "so careful about everything," Mussen said.

He recalled a conversation he had during lunch with Livson recently af-

ter he returned from a trip abroad.

"We discussed where a single woman could go safely" on a trip overseas, Mussen said.

Livson had been divorced some years ago from Norman Livson, chairman of the psychology department at California State University at Hayward.

Oakland police Sgt. Burnie Matthews said the last person reported to have seen the 55-year-old El Cerrito woman alive was a janitor at 921 The Alameda in Berkeley, where Livson had an office.

The janitor, whose name Matthews would not disclose, saw Livson leave the building alone and go to her car about 11 p.m. Wednesday.

Her fully clothed body was found at about 8 p.m. Thursday, and coroner's deputies said that she had been dead for at least 12 hours by then.

No personal papers were found with the body, and it was not until

late Saturday night that she was identified by a friend. Her car was recovered Sunday night near the Oakland Coliseum, about eight miles away, but Matthews said Monday that police found no clues in it.

See PSYCHOLOGIST, Page B-2

Continued from Page B-1

According to El Cerrito police, a missing person's report had been filed Friday night by another psychologist who works in the same building. Police said the colleague called after Livson did not show up for work Friday as expected.

Matthews said police were interviewing as many of her

Wednesday patients as they could reach in a so-far futile search for clues.

Livson's empty wallet was recovered, and Matthews did not discount robbery as a possible motive. He said the motive did not appear to have been sex, however.

Now listed in the yellow pages of the phone book as a psychotherapist and hypnotherapist, Livson was best known for her

studies of the psychology of middle age, especially among women.

The Institute of Human Development, which was started in the 1920s, studies the development of people throughout life's stages, said UC spokesman Ray Colvig.

Colvig noted that celebrated psychologist Erik Erikson has made notable contributions as a researcher to the institute.

Florine Livson memorial fund started

MIN 12 1981
Besides a \$5,000 reward fund already established, friends of slain University of California psychologist Florine Livson have begun collecting money for a memorial fund.

Harvey Peskin of UC's Institute of Human Development said the memorial fund is for "educational purposes," but it has not been decided if these will include scholarships.

Money for the fund is being collected at the institute by colleagues of Livson whose body was found June 4 at the edge of Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park.

The reward fund, announced on Tuesday, is also being collected by members of the institute, and is held in escrow by the Wells Fargo Bank, in an account that Peskin said is separate from the memorial fund.